



Public Safety Communications Highlights

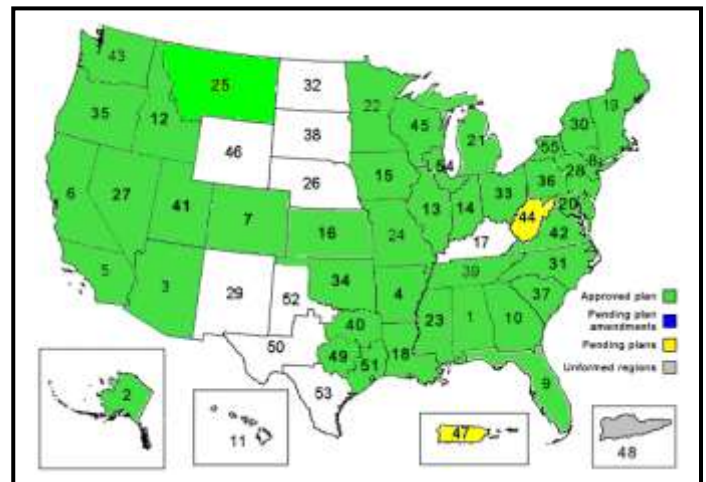
- Dale Osborne, MHP, and Jack Spillman, Flathead County Public Safety Communications, attended an APCO Automated Frequency Coordination (AFC) training seminar for state frequency coordinators. APCO is moving to a new web-based frequency coordination software, which should greatly enhance the coordination process. Dale then attended the annual National Regional Planning Council 700/800 MHz workshop for training and networking purposes.
- The Central Montana 9 1-1 Center's deployment of trunking is complete, and Dorothy Gremaux, the Center's 9-1-1 Supervisor and E9-1-1 Coordinator, once again sends kudos to everyone involved in making the changeover project a success. She also reported on a scanning issue that occurs if subscriber units are on a digital channel and scanning both conventional and trunking. Other than this issue, which is being addressed, the project is working well.
- Charlie Gilmore, Lewis and Clark Co., reports that the county is reprogramming several hundred radios and repeaters this month for narrowbanding. City of Helena radios will be reprogrammed next month.
- Don't forget to register to the NOAA National Weather Service-Great Falls and Space Weather Prediction Center's webinar on Wed., May 2, from 9 to 10 am. The session will examine solar storm activity and potential impacts on communications networks and other vulnerable infrastructure in high-latitude locations such as Montana. Reserve your spot by clicking [here](#).

Montana Regional 700 MHz Public Safety Plan Approved

On April 17, the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) announced its approval of the Region 25 (Montana) 700 MHz Public Safety Plan. Montana's 700 MHz Regional Planning Committee (RPC) submitted its plan for General Use spectrum in the 769-775/799-805 MHz band to the FCC on Aug. 22, 2011.

The FCC requires each regional plan to contain

certain elements and the plan must be coordinated with adjacent regions. Region 25 coordinated its plan with all four adjacent regions including: Region 12 (Idaho), Region 32 (North Dakota), Region 38 (South Dakota), and Region 46 (Wyoming).



Region 25 convened its first meeting on May 29, 2002, wherein it elected its chairman, and officers. Members of Region 25 adopted the plan on Oct. 12, 2010, which includes bylaws, a detailed membership list, and meeting notices and summaries. The plan describes the procedures for requesting spectrum allotments; details the application review process; and outlines system implementation criteria, spectrum utilization, and system implementation. A copy of the Region 25 Plan is available [here](#).

The plan confirms that the State of Montana administers the state interoperability channels through its Dept. of Administration (DOA), Public Safety Services Bureau (PSSB). Land mobile radio licensing for state and local public safety agencies is the responsibility of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Frequency utilization plans for all mutual aid and most common frequencies have been developed by the PSSB, which is part of the State Information Technology Services Division within DOA.

The approved regional 700 MHz plan provides guidelines for use of low power channels, and notes that the Computer-Aided Pre-coordination Resource Database system (CAPRAD) will be utilized to assist with adjacent region coordination. The Region 25 Chair also certified that all planning meetings were open to the public.

The Region 25 Plan pre-allocates the consolidated narrowband General Use spectrum by county. On Jan. 18, 2012, the Bureau released a Public Notice seeking comment on the Region 25 Plan, but did not receive

HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

any. Based on its review, it concluded that it complies with FCC rules and policies. Accordingly, the Region 25 (Montana) 700 MHz Public Safety Plan has now been approved. To read the entire FCC Public Notice, please visit one of these links:

- http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DA-12-606A1.doc
- http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DA-12-606A1.pdf

Eastern Microwave Build-Out Project Completed

The Eastern Microwave Build-Out project along with the installation of the Hathaway site microwave hop is officially complete. Dave Clouse, Project Manager, reported that the crew was re-deployed on the project to address remaining “punch list” items and to finish the Hathaway site. Testing of the hop was completed, and the microwave path is stable.

Great progress was made on all the punch-list items, with just a few delays expected due to a lag in parts delivery. However, all items are expected to be addressed before the April 30 grant cycle deadline.



The Fallon Tower in Richland County silhouetted by the late afternoon sun.
(Photo by Tom Dunne, Dunne Communications)

The eastern microwave system is now ready to connect the Northern Tier trunked sites of Culberson,

Plentywood and Scobey to the Eastern Zone 2 Controller in Richland County. Also, ProVision software updates have been installed to facilitate network monitoring of the microwave system.

The Roosevelt County-owned microwave system is experiencing errors, which is delaying testing of the circuits to Helena as well as to the Windy Hill and Gideon sites. After it is repaired and stabilized, circuit testing will resume before the Eastern Zone 2 Controller is connected to both the Master Controller in Helena and the Windy Hill and Gideon trunked sites.

A path engineering study of the Government Hill to Fallon hop shows the path to be at 99.999% availability. Also, a recently completed structural analysis on the Government Hill tower did not reveal any structural problems. Microwave dishes have been installed at 105- and 135-feet, and the initial review of weather and performance data did not indicate any signal fading associated with high wind gusts; however, a more complete review is underway along with additional monitoring.

NECP Goal # 2 Reporting Update

Goal # 2 of the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP) focuses on the demonstration of response-level emergency communications by all counties during day-to-day or routine incidents. Montana counties need to report on two types of information related to response-level emergency communications: capabilities and performance abilities.

Capability data is based on the key foundational elements of the SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum. Performance data focuses on the ability of primary operational leadership to communicate, manage resources, and make timely decisions during an incident, exercise or planned event. Click [here](#) for the capabilities questionnaire and [here](#) for the county performance survey. When complete, please e-mail them to E. Wing Spooner, PSSB, espooner@mt.gov. Questions? Call her at 406-444-2491.

Here is the latest list of Montana counties that have submitted both of these reports. Congratulations!

County	Capabilities Report	Performance Ability Report
Blaine	Yes	Yes
Flathead	Yes	Yes
Hill	Yes	Yes
Judith Basin	Yes	Yes
Liberty	Yes	Yes
McCone	Yes	Yes
Park	Yes	Yes
Prairie	Yes	Yes
Richland	Yes	Yes
Roosevelt	Yes	Yes

HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

State Agency Radio Users Task Force Meeting

Members of the State Agency Radio Users Task Force began their Tues. April 17 meeting in Helena with a discussion of narrowbanding. Chair Mike Stapp, Disaster and Emergency Services (DES), said he is still in the process of pursuing MOUs to be able to purchase narrowband radios on behalf of various jurisdictions. Participants discussed radio features and distribution strategies, including a proposal that only to those counties that have submitted their capabilities and performance NECP Goal #2 reporting forms be eligible for the radios.

Dale Osborne, Montana Highway Patrol (MHP), reported that he and another member of the SIGB Technical Working Group are reviewing the DHS FY10 narrowband equipment applications. In addition, he said that the Kalispell, Great Falls and Havre MHP districts have all been using trunking. He also spoke about the UHF T-Band ramifications of the new Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN) Act.

Reporting for the National Guard and DES, Mike indicated that Ron Weber, the new National Guard spectrum manager, will start attending meetings as the National Guard representative. Mike also reported that the DES communications truck is up and running and the radio cache is programmed. A demo is planned between Montana and Delaware soon. DES is in the process of scheduling ACU Gateway training. The Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) planned Technical Assistance for Montana this year will consist of interoperability governance assistance for the SWIC office and an Aux-Com class aimed at the amateur radio community. Mike is still working on distribution of surplus radios for amateur radio use.

Jim DeTienne, DPHHS, reported that his section has additional mobile radios available for free distribution to ambulance services that have 50% of their workers complete the "Mutual Aid for EMS" communications training on the Emergency Medical

Services and Trauma Systems Section's LearningZen online resource.

It was announced that Bruce Brown, FBI, is transferring to New Mexico. Bruce has been a valuable resource to Montana's statewide interoperable efforts, and will be greatly missed.

The next meeting is set for Tues., May 15 from 2:30-4:00 pm in Room 160 of the Mitchell Building.

Emergency Medical Dispatch Training

Two Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) classes are being held in June: one June 5-8 in Missoula and another June 19-22 in Glasgow at no charge to participants. In addition, participants will receive a set of EMD guide cards. The EMS and Trauma System Section (EMSTS) of the Dept. of Public Health & Human Svcs. is licensed to use the Criteria Based Dispatch (CBD) program developed by King County, WA in the early 1990's and is sponsoring the training. This high-quality program features continuous evaluation and medical oversight. The classes will be taught by Montana dispatchers and EMS personnel who are currently using the CBD system. Pre-registration is required. To register, contact Joe Hansen at 406-444-0901 or jhansen3@mt.gov.

Upcoming Meetings

- **Thurs., May 3: Northern Tier Consortium**
Havre • 10:00 am - 12:30 pm
Hill County Detention Center Courtroom Mtg. Area
1450 2nd St. West
- **Tues., May 8: Statewide Interoperability Governing Board (SIGB)**
Helena • 10:00 am - noon
State Capitol, Room 172
http://itsd.mt.gov/policy/councils/sigb/05082012_meeting.mcp
- **Tues., May 15: State Agency Radio Users Task Force**
Helena • 2:30 - 4:00 pm
Mitchell Building, 125 N. Roberts, Rm. 160